TIBETAN CAMEL PACKING IN CHU RING (QURANG) COMMUNITY, GSER CHEN (GONGHE) COUNTY, MTSHO LHO (HAINAN) TIBETAN AUTONOMOUS PREFECTURE, MTSHO SNGON (QINGHAI) PROVINCE, PR CHINA

Skal bzang tshe brtan སྐལ་བཟང་ཚེ་བརྟན། (Gazangcaidan 尕藏才旦) *

ABSTRACT

Tibetans in Chu ring (Qurang) Community, Gser chen (Gonghe) County, Mtsho lho (Hainan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Mtsho sngon (Qinghai) Province, PR China packed camels into the late 1980s. The local cultural significance of camels; local camel accounts; details of camel packing; a film transcript in English of loading and unloading a camel; an appendix of camel terms based on gender, color, and castrated or uncastrated; a map; and twelve photographs are presented.

KEYWORDS

Mtsho lho (Hainan) Prefecture, Tibetan camel herding, Tibetan camel packing, Tibetan camel terms

INTRODUCTION

In 2015, I was in an oral English class of thirty-four university students who were from Dbus gtsang (Weizang), A mdo (Anduo), and Khams (Kangba). We were all Tibetans, except for one Monguor (Tu) classmate from Reb gong (Tongren). Everyone gave a short presentation about the culture of their home community.

Kun 'grub tshe ring from Reb gong, described *thang ka* painting and its popularity in his home area.[1] Skal bzang dar rgyas from Dbus gtsang explained how his community bordered Nepal and how locals traded and traveled freely among China-Nepal border communities.[2] Rin chen rdo rje from Mtsho lho (Hainan) in A mdo described and illustrated making *rtsam pa* that included offering a chunk to our foreign English teacher and a finger-sized sampling to each of the rest of us.[3] I made a presentation about horses, yaks, sheep, donkeys, and camels in my home community.

My classmates and I thought our presentations were quite ordinary, but they provided our foreign teacher with a better understanding of us and Tibetan culture. Subsequently, the foreign teacher encouraged me to write about camels. Though we had an opportunity to publish our cultural anecdotes in *Highlands*, I did not because, at that time, my English was limited.

However, two years later, in 2017, I decided to write about my childhood experiences with camels (Skal bzang tshe brtan 2017). After watching a yak-packing film,[4] I wanted to write more about local camel culture. My interest was further encouraged after searching Youtube on 19 October 2019 and finding no Tibetan camel-packing videos.

* Skal bzang tshe brtan (Gazangcaidan). 2021. Tibetan Camel Packing in Chu ring (Qurang) Community, Gser chen (Gonghe) County, Mtsho lho (Hainan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Mtsho sngon (Qinghai) Province, PR China. *Asian Highlands Perspectives* 60:161-194.

1 In 2015, Kun 'grub tshe ring published *Thang ka* in *Highlands*, an informal publication featuring student essays written in English, Chinese, and Tibetan.

2 Skal bzang dar rgyas participated in an intercollegiate English examination for all-China in 2014, which included oral and written exams, and was awarded third place. In 2020, he worked at a bank in Lha sa.

3 After graduation, he worked as a temporary teacher in a nationalities primary school. In 2020, he was a father and an entrepreneur.

4 https://bit.ly/2KKf2bU (accessed 21 August 2019).

This article presents views and accounts related to camels from local people in Chu ring (Qurang) Hamlet. I describe packing and unpacking processes in a documentary film and provide an English version of the film's spoken content. Finally, I present camel terms for camel gear, color, age, gender, and castrated and uncastrated.

MAPS.

FIG 1. A map of China, Mtsho sngon (Qinghai), Gser chen (Gonghe), and Chu ring.[1]

[1] China https://bit.ly/3jHC4PVm (accessed 25 July 2020); Mtsho sngon Province https://bit.ly/2OUdfSB, (accessed 23 July 2020); Mtsho lho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture https://bit.ly/2Blyd9U (accessed 23 July 2020); and an edited version of Gser chen County https://bit.ly/39jA4sB (accessed 23 July 2020).

FIG 2. Gser chen County (inside the pink outline).[1]

[1] https://bit.ly/2yJLk2U, accessed 24 April 2020.

FIG 3. Locations in the text.[1]

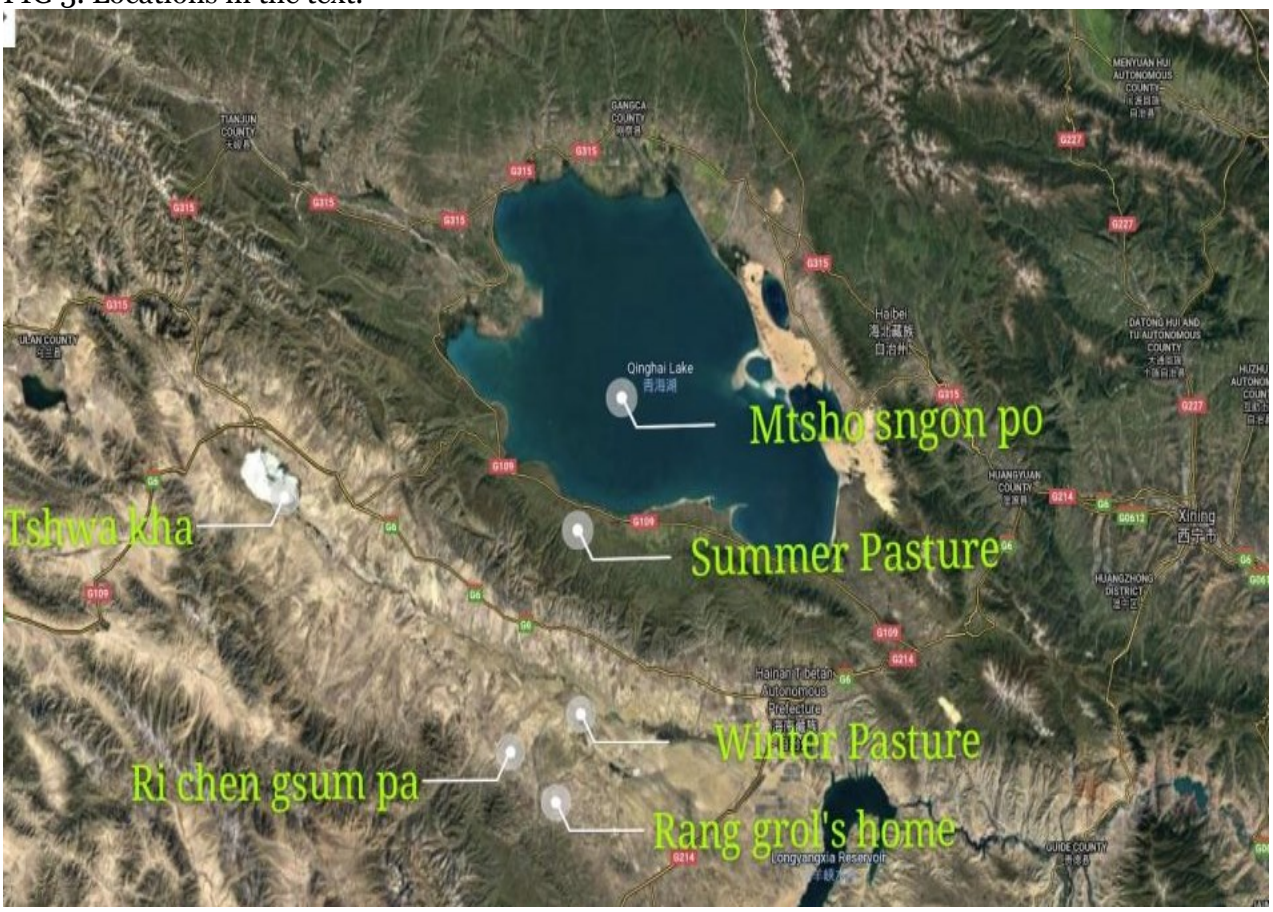

FIG 4. People in the text.

Name	Birth Year	Description
A b+hu yag	1928	Snying thar rgyal's paternal uncle
Phag mo sgrol ma	~1987	sister of Rang grol
Rang grol	1972	author's paternal uncle
Rdo rje	2015	nephew of Rang grol
Ri b+ho	1943	author's maternal grandmother
Skal bzang tshe brtan	1995	author
Skar ma 'tsho	1971	wife of Rang grol
Snying thar rgyal	1962	author's father
Tshu dbang pa thur	~1970	Tshul khrims' employer, who owned about 900 sheep and six camels. He and his wife spent most of their time in their Tshwa ka (Chaka) Township Town apartment, caring for their children who attended school in the town.
Tshul khrims	~1980	author's maternal uncle

[1] https://bit.ly/2yHHNlK, accessed 24 April 2020.

FIG 5. Locations in the text.

Name	Location
Chu ring	Chu ring 'Long-Flowing River' Hamlet, Thang dkar ma (Tanggemu) Town, Gser chen County, Mtsho lho (Hainan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Mtsho sngon Province. A river flows through the center of Chu ring Hamlet.
Mtsho sngon po (Kokonor, Qinghai Lake)	Located about one hundred kilometers west of the provincial capital, Zi ling (Xining), at an elevation of ~3,000 meters.
Rang grol's brick, white-tiled house	About five kilometers from Ru chen gsum pa (Sandadui) 'Third Major Division'.
Ru chen gsum pa	Ru chen gsum pa is west of Thang dkar ma Town, northwest of Mtsho lho Prefecture. Previous to 2003, Ru chen gsum pa was a prison camp. Prisoners worked in the fields and greenhouses, cultivating crops and vegetables. After 2003, all the prisoners were transferred to Zi ling.
Summer pasture	In summer, Chu ring Hamlet residents who own livestock and have fenced pastures herd northwest of Mtsho sngon po, between Cang shes Town and Rta nag ma Township Town. However, most elders stay at their homes in winter pastures. Each household stays one to two months, depending on the number of their livestock and their fenced pasture size. Moving between the winter and summer pastures takes two days on foot, or by horse or motorcycle with livestock, and three to five hours by car when not following the livestock and horse riders. At the end of the first day of moving livestock, the family pitches a tent while the livestock graze and rest. They reach the summer pasture the next day.
Tshwa kha	Tshwa kha Township, Wulan County, Mtsho nub (Haixi) Mongolian and Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Mtsho sngon Province.
Winter pasture	This semi-arid location once had a small saline lake and is considered a good place for camels.

LOCAL CAMEL ACCOUNTS

ACCOUNT ONE: MOTHER HAS BLANKETS MADE

In 2001, when I was six years old, my family had a camel that I rode to herd cattle and sheep. Light, warm blankets were made from the camel hair. My parents believe camel hair makes the warmest, lightest blankets. Mother told me:

Our family had six camels. Each adult camel produced about half a sack of hair annually. In the fourth month, I pulled hair from the camels and used sheep-wool shears to cut hair from their legs. *Thung ji* 'neck hair' is cut with shears in the second month, but it's not suitable for making blankets. Instead, it is

used for horse hobbles and calf neck-ties. Six camels produced four sacks of camel hair in about two years. Some camels lost hair by rubbing against thorn bushes, and some just shed their hair.

One summer morning, I got up very early, around four AM, ate some bread, and had some tea that I had boiled the night before, and poured in a thermos before I had gone to bed. After that, I put four sacks of camel hair on a horse and tied you to my back. I then filled two empty plastic Sprite bottles with cow's milk for you to have on the journey and set off with 150 RMB in cash. I didn't ride the horse because I feared it would throw us off and injure you.

I walked with you on my back, led the horse with sacks on its back, and continuously chanted mantras that I had learned from my mother. We reached Thang dkar ma Town at around nine AM, where I asked a relative I happened to meet to look after the horse, which he took to a nearby unfenced pasture and tethered to a bush. We soon boarded a bus. It took about three hours to reach the prefecture town - Chab cha (Qiabuqia). After getting off, I found a restaurant where I ordered noodles and gave you some milk. The bus fee was ten RMB, and the bowl of noodles was seven RMB. Next, I went to a store where blankets were made from various animal hair. I paid sixteen RMB to a Chinese woman in her forties to have two blankets made.

Next, I went shopping for new clothes at Mi rigs tshong ra 'Nationality Mall' and bought a dark blue jacket, a pair of dark blue pants, a pair of canvas shoes for myself, and red and green trim to decorate the hem of my satin summer robe. For you, I paid thirty RMB for a cute light-blue jean suit, two pairs of blue socks, and a black cap that featured an image of a white, clever-looking rabbit. Finally, we left and reached Thang dkar ma Town with the two new camel-hair blankets and the new clothes.

I could not find my relative, so I asked a shop-owner where my horse was. He told me the horse was tied and grazing east of town, which was part of my maternal tribe's territory. I carried you, the blankets, and the new clothes to where the horse was tied. I was tired, so I rested for a short time before briskly untying the horse, putting the horse's red and black mat on its back, and adding the blankets and new clothes. We then started for home and arrived at dusk. I didn't want to cook, so I ate a chunk of *rtsam pa*, gave you a bottle of milk, and went to bed.

ACCOUNT TWO: A SALT-PACKING ROUTE AND A SALT-LAKE SONG

My community members call people who live on the east side of the Rma chu (Yellow River) "Rma chu'i phar kha'i mi 'people of the other side of the Yellow River'." Meanwhile, people who live on the east side of the Yellow River use the same term to refer to those of us who live on the west side.

Rma chu'i phar kha'i mi used camels for various purposes, such as transporting salt from Wo dbye tshwa mtsho dkar mo,[1] visiting their relatives living far away, and pursuing bandits, and crossing the Yellow River. Brug byams said each tribe had well-established routes to the salt lake on salt collection trips and traded salt in such areas as Stong skor (Huangyuan) and Khri ka (Guide). If other tribespeople deviated from an established route, conflict ensued that sometimes grew into bloody tribal fighting.

In 2020, salt collection continues, but excavators now load salt into big trucks that transport the salt to cities.[2]

[1] *'Wo dbye'* is a local term, and might be Mongolian. Tshwa mtsho dkar mo 'White Salt Lake'. Many locals believe this Tshwa mtsho dkar mo refers to the famous salt lake in Tshwa kha Township. Other locals suggest Tshwa mtsho dkar mo was in Chu ring Community territory. However, it is obvious there once was a salt pond in the center of Chu ring Community, because of white salty earth there. (My family lives near the dried white pond and fetches salty water from a well with a long rope and a bucket.)

[2] Father once spotted a pile of salt on the highway while he was driving home and asked me and two of my uncles to take ten sacks and go bag the salt. When we reached the spilled salt, some had already been taken. Still, we filled eight sacks.

Wo dbye gzhung is located in Chu ring Community, where a river flows from Wo dbye tshwa mtsho dkar mo 'Wo dbye Basin/Area'. Those who lived in this area entreated the salt deities to bestow an ample supply of salt. Therefore, locals of my father's generation and older elders often invoke the salt lake's name, along with mountain deity names.

Father learned incense offering chants from his paternal uncle, A b+hu yag. I recorded Father's incense offering chant on my iPhone and typed each line into my iPhone's *Notes* in Tibetan while listening to the recording. When I need to offer incense, I consult this text. The names of the deities Father chants while making incense offerings are listed below:

- Gnam skyong gong ma rgyal mo[1]
- Srung ma dpal ldan lha mo[2]
- A myes rma chen[3]
- A myes brag dkar (a mountain deity in Khri ka)
- A myes yul lha (a deity who is the incarnation of Jam dbyangs nag po 'Black Manjughosa')[4]
- Rdza rgan[5]
- Mtsho sngon khri shor rgyal mo[6]
- Mtsho snying ma hwa de wa (Heart of Mtsho sngon po)
- Blon po gser chen (a mountain deity in the southeast of Mtsho sngon po)
- A myes b+wa yan (a mountain deity in the south of Mtsho lho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture)
- Wo dbye tshwa mtsho dkar mo (a salt lake)
- Kun dga' mtsho mo (a lake in Kun dga' Community)[7]

ACCOUNT THREE: HOW THE CAMEL EMBODIES THE TWELVE ZODIAC ANIMALS

Several authors have provided descriptions of how the camel embodies the twelve zodiac signs. These descriptions have areas of overlap and some differences. Snying lcags rgyal (2016:59) writes:

Gsang sgrog said that a camel represents the twelve animals of a year because its neck resembles that of a dragon, eyes those of a bird, nostrils those of a mouse, mouth that of a rabbit, tail that of a pig, hips

[1] Gnam skyong gong ma rgyal mo 'Heaven Guarding Empress'.
[2] For more, see https://bit.ly/2SPU26R, accessed 19 June 2020.
[3] Snying thar rgyal explains, "A myes rma chen is the only deity who became a Bodhisattva."
[4] For more, see https://www.tbrc.org/#!rid=T716, accessed 12 June 2020.
[5] A mountain deity situated in Brag dkar Community territory, which is adjacent to Chu ring Community. Currently, there are about fifteen communities, including pastoral Tibetans, farming Tibetans, and Chinese who all venerate Rdza rgan. Only males ascend the mountain top. Women are prohibited.
[6] Mtsho sngon khri shor rgyal mo, *mtsho sngon* 'blue lake', *khri shor* 'inundated thousands', *rgyal mo* 'queen', or the 'queenly blue lake' that inundated thousands of communities. Father related this story:

Long ago, where Mtsho sngon po is today, many communities lived together harmoniously. They all drank water from a well located at the center of the area. Whoever fetched water from the well was expected to cover it with a lid when they finished. Unfortunately, one day a foolish man unintentionally forgot to put the lid back. Consequently, water gushed out, inundating an untold number of communities.

[7] On 28 March 2020, I heard from Father that before 2018, locals annually released fish in Kun dga' mtsho mo, during the fourth lunar month. This practice was prohibited by the local government in 2018. Another well-known account involves Tshangs dbyangs rgya mtsho (1683-1706) fleeing political turmoil in central Tibet. While in the vicinity of Chu ring Hamlet and Kun dga' mtsho mo, he thrust the end of his walking stick in the ground and rested. In the east of Chu ring Hamlet where Tshangs dbyangs rgya mtsho thrust the end of his walking stick, there a solitary tree stands among prickly *dug tsher*. In 2015, some seven pilgrims from central Tibet, worshipped and circumambulated the tree.

those of an ox, nose that of a horse, the part of its head from the chin to the forehead resembles a tiger's, its face that of a monkey, feet those of a dog, and its body resembles a snake's. Other locals provide variations, e.g., some say the camel's neck resembles a snake.

Wenchangjia and Stuart (2014:110) provide a slightly different attribution of features:

...the camel represented the twelve animals of the zodiac. A story says the camel was given its teeth by the tiger, mouth by the rabbit, neck by the dragon, eyes by the snake, mane by the horse, stomach by the sheep, body hair by the monkey, hind legs by the rooster, alertness by the dog, tail by the pig, ears by the mouse, and hooves by the bull.

Father provided yet another version of a camel's twelve zodiac animal features, the description of which he attributed to a relative (Dbang kho, b. 1937):

The camel's body has twelve zodiac animal features - tiger's lower lip, rabbit's upper lip, dragon's neck, snake's head, horse's teeth, sheep's wool, monkey's face, rooster's eyes, dog's back feet, pig's tail, mouse's ears, and ox's hooves.

Father mentioned that *tshi lkong* 'scruff of hair on a camel's head between the ears', especially from an uncastrated camel, can repel *the'u rang* 'a type of hungry ghost with evil intentions, though those who worship him as a deity benefit by accumulating great wealth'.[1]

FILMING

In August 2016, I talked to Father about making a film showing how local Tibetans pack and unload camels. He agreed to help. We considered two possibilities. My maternal uncle, Tshul khrims, herded about 850 sheep for a Tshwa kha Mongolian family that owned six camels. Uncle Tshul khrims herded in an area six hours by motorcycle or four hours by car from my family's summer pasture, southwest of Mtsho sngon po. Uncle communicated with his Mongol employer in the Qinghai Chinese dialect and understood some basic Mongolian from spending a lot of time with Mongol herders.

A second possibility, which we eventually chose, was to contact my paternal uncle, Rang grol. He owned four camels that were, at that time, in his winter pasture, which was a three-hour drive by car from my family's summer pasture. The video was eventually made in the winter of 2018 because Uncle Rang grol was often not at home.

The film begins on the grassland where Rdo rje and I are about to drive four camels to Rang grol's home, where the camel packing and unpacking took place. The film was made to illustrate packing and unpacking camels with participants asked to pack and unpack a camel. No instructions were given to the participants about what to say.

I used an iPhone 6s until the battery died. I then switched to an OPPO A37. The video quality conspicuously dropped. Links to the video are
https://bit.ly/2ZfjhjK (accessed 21 August 2019)
and
https://bit.ly/2ZcKtDK (accessed 21 August 2019).

[1] Goldstein (2001:501) offers 'a type of hungry ghost'. Pad ma thub brtan (b. 1977), my paternal uncle and a tantric practitioner, offers an account of *the'u rang* in Appendix One.

Setting

Chu ring Hamlet is informally called Ru chen gsum pa, as mentioned in the location table.

FILMING

On 7 February 2017, Father asked my paternal uncle, Rang grol, for permission to film his camels on an auspicious day. Uncle Rang grol agreed, so 10 February 2017 was chosen as the filming date. On the morning of that day, I woke up and pulled back the bedroom curtain, hoping to see sunny weather good for filming. Unfortunately, it was foggy. After breakfast, I rode out on a motorcycle to drive our sheep from their pen to our fenced pasture. After closing the pasture gate, I returned home. Father was still sleeping. Mother said he had gone to bed in the early dawn after feeding our three horses in preparation for a horserace. I didn't dare wake Father. In about five minutes, Father moved his legs a little. As he turned to one side, I called, "A pha! A pha!"

He slowly opened his eyes and asked what I wanted. I then suggested that we go to film camel packing.

After lunch, Father and I prepared several *sgyes* 'woolen bags', one tent to wrap around the humps to create a *ca sri* 'a frame placed between the camel humps', two *mgo sdom* 'one-meter-long ropes for tying around the two humps', and *sha tho* 'hump supporters'.[1] Two *go tho* 'plastic buckets' were also added. We put all these items in the back of Father's van. I hoped Mother would come with us, but she had to tend our livestock.

When Father and I reached Uncle Rang grol's home, he was waiting and ushered us into his home enthusiastically. His wife, Skar ma 'tsho, offered milk tea in bowls decorated with the *bkra shis rtags brgyad* 'Eight Auspicious Symbols',[2] a plate of fried bread, and a platter of cooked mutton. I lacked the patience to sip milk tea and whispered to Father that I wanted to see the camels.

Uncle Rang grol said that the camels were grazing in a fenced pasture and called his nephew, Rdo rje, a five-year-old boy with big, mischievous eyes, a sharp nose, and a tanned oval face, to take me there. It took us fifteen minutes to walk to the fenced pasture.

On the way, I asked Rdo rje, "Are camels afraid of other animals?"

"Camels are afraid of lions, wolves, and tigers," Rdo rje answered.

"Why are camels afraid of lions? Aren't camels bigger than lions?" I inquired.

"Because lions are the king of animals," Rdo rje replied.

"Why are camels unafraid of people?" I asked.

"Camels have big teeth, and their bites are extremely painful," he stated.

"Do all camels attack people?" I asked.

"Not all. Only *rnga gseb* 'uncastrated camels' attack people, and only in winter," Rdo rje responded.

"Okay. Are you afraid of camels?" I inquired.

"I'm not afraid because I can shout, throw stones at them, and drive them away," Rdo rje replied confidently.

When we reached the fenced pasture, we stepped through the barb wire fence. I saw one *rnga rgan ma* 'old female camel', one *rnga gseb*, and two *rnga thor ma* 'two-year-old female camels'

[1] S*ha to* traditionally referred to poles to stabilize the humps and *ca sri*. However, we did not have *sha to*, so we used *ka ra* 'tent poles'.

[2] Beer (1999:171) identifies the Bkra shis rtags brgyad 'Eight Auspicious Symbols' as a parasol, a pair of golden fishes, a treasure vase, a lotus, a white right-spiraling conch shell, an endless knot, a banner of victory, and a golden wheel.

leisurely grazing. When the camels saw us approaching, they lazily raised their heads atop long necks that reminded me of giraffes. Rdo rje, and I began driving them to Uncle's home. I was excited to see camels and eager to complete filming, so I drove the camels fast. They ran slowly at times, not speeding up like horses. It took ten minutes to drive the camels to Uncle Rang grol's home.

Halfway there, Rdo rje ran ahead because he said he didn't want to miss a cartoon program on the Mtsho sngon Tibetan A mdo Channel at six PM. Rdo rje said it was in Tibetan and about the Monkey King's pilgrimage to the West.

PACKING THE CAMEL

When I returned, Father and Uncle Rang grol were ready to film. Skar ma 'tsho and Phag mo sgrol ma had filled eight *sgyes* with sheep dung pellets to resemble the grain, highland barley, flour, and so forth that a family typically transported to another pasture. A decade earlier, Mother had made *sgyes* from wool dyed with indigo. Uncle Rang grol swiftly put a rope around the *rnga rgan ma's* neck, made the camel sit, and fastened its two front feet together with the lead rope. Father wrapped a canvas tent around the camel's body to replace the *ca sri*.[1]

Father wrapped the canvas tent around the humps three times and tied the hump supporter with a rope. Next, he tied a *glo* 'fifteen-meter-long rope' at the back of the camel to secure the packed items. Skar ma 'tsho put an *e bug* 'blanket between the humps'. Finally, Father and Uncle Rang grol loaded the woolen bags and tied two plastic containers onto the camel's back. Father and Uncle Rang grol finished packing the camel in about ten minutes. Father then held the reins and spoke to the camel, encouraging it to stand.

UNLOADING THE CAMEL

Father led the camel about fifty meters from the packing area and unloaded it. Uncle Rang grol emptied the bags. Father took the halter from the camel's head and thanked the camel: "*A! G.yang la bo, rtswa kha song nga rtswa zo, chu kha song nga chu thungs*. 'Benevolent camel! My benevolent camel! Go graze and drink fresh water'."

At that moment, we heard camels nosily mating. Father and Uncle Rang grol laughed, but I did not. I focused on filming. After a minute, I realized that it was the camel mating period. I thought camels mated, standing like horses. Instead, they sit.

POST-FILMING: FATHER'S ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

ONE

When I was a child, I periodically heard elders explain why camels looked into the distance while they were drinking water:

Long ago, a wise saint, Srid pa rgan po,[2] gave each animal what they needed, but Srid pa rgan po carelessly gave antlers to deer instead of camels. The deer never returned the antlers to the camels, so when camels drink water, they occasionally look into the distance hoping the deer will return their antlers.

[1] Father suggests this term may be from Mongolian, but I maintain it is derived from the Chinese *jiashi* 'drive'.
[2] Locals in my community believe Srid pa rgan po was the distributor of everything – soil, stones, humans, animals, and so on. (*Srid pa* 'existence', *rgan po* 'elder' 'creator yields power of creating everything' 'creator of

When Srid pa rgan po was distributing these animal features, he gave camels small testicles. The bull camels were so enraged they threw the small testicles away, but the testicles stuck between their legs at their rear.

TWO

In summer, camels eat grass near riverbanks, require less water, and defecate watery feces. In winter, camels need less grass, and they defecate *cho'u rig* 'oval-shaped pellets'.

THREE

One chilly winter morning in 1976, I told A rta, the community leader, who was in charge of hundreds of camels, that I wanted to tame a *hog bzhi* 'four-year-old' camel. A rta gave me a white *hog bzhi* to tame and an *a tha* 'castrated camel' as a reward. Frankly, I was initially not interested in taming a camel, but the camel I had received as a reward was helpful in fetching water and transporting belongings to the winter pasture. I was pleased with the reward and delighted to take the two camels to my campsite on the autumn pasture. I periodically gazed at the attractive white *hog bzhi* while heading back home.

One evening when I reached my campsite, my cousin persuaded me, and I agreed to tame the white *hog bzhi*. Cousin and I hobbled the white *hog bzhi'*s front feet*,* but it could still easily move his back feet so that it moved forward. We then hobbled the back feet.

The next morning, I found white *hog bzhi* splendidly decorated with frost. Unable to easily move his feet, he had fallen, sat, and in trying to get up, had repeatedly hit his head against the ground, fracturing his neck. Not knowing what to do, I returned to report to my family members, none of whom had a solution.

The following morning, I saw the white *hog bzhi* on the ground with his feet in the air. I thought he had died, but when I approached, I found that he was still alive. His fractured neck was continually bending, even when he tried to eat, making him resemble a giant snake with feet.

A month later, when my family moved to the winter pasture with the *a tha*, I worried about the white *hog bzhi*.

My family stayed on the winter pasture for almost two months before returning to where the white *hog bzhi had been*. I discovered that not only was the white *hog bzhi* stuck to frozen Kun dga' Lake with his four feet in the air, he was still alive! After I freed him, he walked away, unevenly with his neck bent down. I was sure he had eaten and drunk nothing during that period. Depressed, I consulted Uncle Tha re who, I had been told, had once treated a camel with a neck fracture. Uncle stuck two poles in the earth, tied a rope to the upper parts of the poles, and leaned the white *hog bzhi'*s head on the rope. The camel could then stretch his head. He slowly ate bundles of grass in the back of a truck with a wide, long, unenclosed bed. In the beginning, eating was difficult, but several days later, he ate effortlessly. Four to five months later, the white *hog bzhi* had recuperated so entirely that it seemed he had never been injured.

Afterward, I packed our heavy necessities on the white *hog bzhi* to transport to different pastures. I still marvel at how strong and amiable that white *hog bzhi* was.

Two years later, I rode the *a tha* to return the white *hog bzhi* to A rta, as he had stipulated. I was eager to have another camel-taming experience and receive another reward.

existence'.) Ri b+ho said, "Srid pa rgan po created everything on Earth, and is that powerful." Certain locals believe that Srid pa rgan po was a wise old man who assembled his various experiences into oral adages.

FOUR

When I was a child, my parents put me on camelback when we moved pastures. I vividly recall munching bread while sitting on a camel frame as we moved. In the 1970s, when I was an energetic teenager, there were over ninety camels in our community. The camels gathered around a small salty pond in my home community that dried up in the 1980s.

Winter was a frightening time because *rnga gseb* attacked people on foot and those riding horses. I often hid behind *kho tse* 'desert thorn bushes' when I saw *rnga gseb* while I was herding our livestock. In winter, a *rnga gseb* often gathered female camels in a circle, raised its dirty tail that touched its testicles, and dabbed its tail in urine while urinating. *Rnga gseb* tails were dark and dirty.

FILM TRANSCRIPT

CHARACTERS

Phag mo sgrol ma (b. ~1987) is Rang grol's sister. She is a herder and skilled at tailoring. She brought ropes and other items for Snying thar rgyal and Rang grol.
Rang grol (b. 1972) is Snying thar rgyal's paternal cousin and a herder. He assisted Snying thar rgyal in packing and unpacking the camel and initiating conversation during the filming.
Rdo rje (b. 2005) is Phag mo sgrol ma's son and a student in Thang dkar ma bca' sdod slob chung 'Thang dkar ma Boarding Primary School'. Rdo rje went to the pasture with Skal bzang tshe brtan, and helped drive the camels back to Rang grol's home.
Skar ma 'tsho (b. 1975) is Rang grol's wife.
Snying thar rgyal (b. 1962) is Skal bzang tshe brtan's father and a herder. He demonstrated how to pack and unpack a camel.

ABBREVIATIONS

Ext. exterior
Int. interior

COLLECTING CAMELS

EXT. PASTURE INTO VIEW - AFTERNOON

A cloudy day. Can't see far. Four camels on the grassland. Rdo rje tries to collect them. Camels slowly step through the pasture gate.

Skal bzang tshe brtan
(In a suggestive tone)

Don't go near the camels.

Rdo rje
(Naively)

I'd like to go near.

Rdo rje goes ahead and tries to drive the camels from Rang grol's fenced pasture into another fenced pasture, and Skal bzang tshe brtan drives the four camels at the back while shooting the film.

EXT. ON THE NARROW LANE BETWEEN TWO FENCED PASTURES LEADING TO RANG GROL'S HOME

Skal bzang tshe brtan stomps his feet, urging the camels to run faster. The camels start running slowly.

EXT. CAMELS ARE RUNNING DOWN A SMALL HILL. TRACKING SHOT

About a kilometer from Rang grol's house, Skal bzang tshe brtan and Rdo rje run after the camels. Dust rises after the camels as their flaccid humps wave in the air.

EXT. APPROXIMATELY ONE HUNDRED METERS FROM RANG GROL'S HOUSE.

Camels come to a turn and go straight to the front of Rang grol's house.

PACKING

EXT. INTO FRAME IN FRONT OF THE SHEEP PEN NEAR RANG GROL'S HOUSE. THE FOCUS IS THE CAMEL'S BACK.

Eight bags filled with sheep dung pellets are near a camel. Snying thar rgyal is ready to pack the camel. Rang grol assists. The camel stands. Snying thar rgyal ties a rope around the camel's body. Snying thar rgyal commands the camel to sit. Rang grol holds the camel curb ring.

Snying thar rgyal
(In a commanding tone)

The camel should sit.

Rang grol
(Loudly)

Tshigs tshigs tshigs.

Rang grol uses the lead rope to tie the camel's front legs with two hobbles. A lamb bleats. The camera shifts slowly to the front of the sitting camel. Snying thar rgyal kneels to tighten the hobbles.

Snying thar rgyal
(Panting heavily)

Let's fold the tent.

The camera lens switches at the back of the camel. Snying thar rgyal and Rang grol fold the *ca sri*. Phag mo sgrol ma brings two metal tent poles to use as a support frame for the humps.

INT. THE WHITE TILE HOUSE

Skar ma 'tsho is in the house and puzzled about what she should bring.

EXT. NEAR THE SHEEP PEN

Snying thar rgyal
(In an instructive tone)

This is a tent.

(Turning to Phag mo sgrol ma)

Bring a mat.

INT. THE WHITE TILE HOUSE

Skar ma 'tsho
(Asks indistinctly)

There is this, is it okay?

EXT. NEAR THE SHEEP PEN

Snying thar rgyal
(Still busy folding the tent)

Any mat is okay.

Rang grol holds one side of the tent and turns to where Skar ma 'tsho is in the house.

Rang grol
(Shouting)

Bring a mat!

INT. THE STOREROOM

Skar ma 'tsho
(Hollering from the house)

Need ropes?

EXT. NEARBY THE SHEEP PEN

Rang grol
(In a decisive tone)

No, no, no, no need.

INT. AT THE STOREROOM

Skar ma 'tsho
(Asks loudly again)

No need for ropes, right?

EXT. NEAR THE SHEEP PEN

Rang grol and Snying thar rgyal
(Responding chorus)

What? Oh, no need for ropes.

INT. AT THE STOREROOM

Skar ma 'tsho
(Answers readily)

Okay!

Snying thar rgyal and Rang grol finish folding the tent. Snying thar rgyal stands for a while, looking into the distance. Lambs bleat indistinctly.

EXT. IN FRONT OF THE CAMEL

Snying thar rgyal puts a mat on the camel's back. Rang grol grips the tent. Five meters away, Skar ma 'tsho and Phag mo sgrol ma stand together. There are three other camels, a car, a van, a lamb, a horse, a three-wheel vehicle, and several electric poles in the background.

Skar ma 'tsho
(Trying to amuse the baby Phag mo sgrol ma is carrying)

Ho, ho, ho!

Rang grol
(Said while circling the tent around the camel's humps)

It may snow today so let's gather our stuff fast. We ought to reach our winter pasture. What is this? How does this rope go? It doesn't seem like this.

Snying thar rgyal

This way. Do it like this.

(Continues talking)

Circle once. It is a camel *ca sri*. We used *ca sri*. We now use a tent as *ca sri* and two tent poles as hump supporters for convenience. Then we can start our journey.
(Told Rang grol)

Pull the rope down.

Rang grol
(No idea what's going on)

Uh-huh!

Snying thar rgyal
(Impatiently)

This, this is *glo*.

Rang grol

I got it.

Snying thar rgyal

Tie the two posts together.

Rang grol

Oh! I see.

Snying thar rgyal rests his arms on the camel's back and attempts to tie the two posts with a rope.

Snying thar rgyal
(Panting heavily and saying)
We need another rope.

Rang grol
(Turning to Phag mo sgrol ma)
Bring another rope.

Phag mo sgrol ma
(Turns to Skar ma 'tsho)
Rope! Rope! Rope!

EXT. IN FRONT OF RANG GROL'S HOUSE

Skar ma 'tsho is photographing other camels and then runs to find a rope.

EXT. IN FRONT OF THE CAMEL

Snying thar rgyal
(In a demonstrative tone)
Glo should go through here.

Skar ma 'tsho returns with a worn-out rope and hands the rope to Snying thar rgyal.

Snying thar rgyal
We should have a solid rope. Otherwise, when the bags are tied on the camel's back, they will fall off.
(Trying to shake the back posts)
Is it unbreakable?

Rang grol
Yeah, I guess so.

Snying thar rgyal
(In an instructive tone)
Afterward, when you guys pack camels, floppy-humped camels don't need adjustment. Humps that lean back are stable. If camel humps lean to the right, put more items on the left, and vice versa.

Rang grol
(Seemingly amazed by Snying thar rgyal's camel knowledge)
Oh! Okay!

Snying thar rgyal
Bring an *e bug*.

Rang grol
(Turns to Skar ma 'tsho)
We need an *e bug*.

Snying thar rgyal
(Puts a hand on each hump)
I'm going to the winter pasture from the winter house, pack goods on the camel, and ride a horse to lead the camel. That's much faster than leading packed yaks. It's different from the old ways of driving yaks. Driving sheep takes five or six hours. However, leading camels takes only two hours. Pretty fast!

Phag mo sgrol ma
(Sudden interruption)
If you don't ride a horse, you could ride a camel!

Snying thar rgyal
It's okay for me to ride a camel, but I won't ride a camel today.

(Thinks for a bit and continues)
Camels are called *bye thang gi gru gzings* 'vehicles of the desert'. If bikes, motorcycles, and cars didn't exist, camels would be the most reliable transportation. In the old days, camels provided convenient transportation. One camel can haul one family's belongings.

(While Snying thar rgyal was talking, Rang grol brought an *e bug*. Snying thar rgyal took the *e bug* and continued)
This is an *e bug*. This is a camel's *e bug*.

Rang grol
(Puzzling)
E bug? What language is it?

Snying thar rgyal
(Tying the *e bug* between humps)
The original term is probably Mongolian. Camel gear all have Mongolian names.
(Turned to Phag mo sgrol ma and asked)
Need another rope?

Phag mo sgrol ma
(Replying and leaving to find a rope)
Rope!

Snying thar rgyal
(Holding a long rope in his hands, he explains)
The ropes should be equal in length. Today, we'll use *thur 'gel* 'a method of tying light goods on camelback' instead of *sog 'gel* 'a method of tying heavy goods on camelback' packing. For today's light goods on camelback, it's better to use *thur 'gel*. For heavy goods, it is better to use *sog 'gel*. Ropes should be placed like this.

Skar ma 'tsho
(Brought a rough rope complaining)
This rope is a little black. Why is it different from the ones you two use?
Rang grol and Snying thar rgyal fasten the *ca sri* and begin putting the bags on the camel.

Rang grol
(In a puzzled tune)
Can I tie the rope to the bag from its bottom?

Snying thar rgyal
(Without hesitation)
Should go through here.

Snying thar rgyal and Rang grol are busy tying the bags. Phag mo sgrol ma carries her baby in a green sash tied to her back. A lamb bleats.

Snying thar rgyal
Put the bag down a bit.

Rang grol
Should the *glo* be taken out?

Snying thar rgyal
(Holding the rope's end and grabbing another bag)
No, it's unnecessary to remove it.

Rang grol
Should I put another on the camel?

Snying thar rgyal
Uh-huh!

A lamb that bleats frequently seems to be looking for its mother.

Rang grol
How does this rope go?

Snying thar rgyal
Just here.
(Quiet for a while, and then says humorously)
Bags are made from wool, and wool is dyed with indigo.

Phag mo sgrol ma brings a rope to Rang grol

Phag mo sgrol ma
Here you are!

Snying thar rgyal
(Looking at Rang grol)
Put it anywhere you want.

Rang grol
Tie where?

Snying thar rgyal

Anywhere, as long as it is stable.

Phag mo sgrol ma
(in an astonished tone)

Oh! Four plus four... Wow! Eight bags.

Snying thar rgyal is about to set out and ties the buckets to the *sha to*. Sheep bleat randomly. A camel approaches the sitting camel. The sitting camel is uncomfortable and moves.

Snying thar rgyal
(Comforts the camel by saying)

Ho! Ho!

The camel is silent. Two camels look at the sitting camel. A dog barks furiously.

Snying thar rgyal
(Turning to Rang grol)

Is there anything to tie the bucket?

Rang grol picks a rope from the ground and brings it to Snying thar rgyal. A camel passes by the sitting camel.

Snying thar rgyal
(In a suggestive tone)

This bucket can be tied to the hump supporters. Buckets and other small items can be tied to the hump supporters. Tie the bucket somewhere here. Ride the camel if you like. I mean it. Just sit between the two humps on the goods.

Rang grol
(Refusing, saying)

I can lead the camel, and you can sit on it.

Snying thar rgyal
(Annoyed)

Let's untie the hobbles.

Rang grol

Is there anything to put on the back of the camel to make the load heavier?

Snying thar rgyal
(Untying the hobbles and explaining, ready to leave)

There are buckets. Buckets are for fetching water and storing milk. There are blankets at the center. Food and forage are in bags, and I'll head to the campsite. Ho, ho, ho.

Snying thar rgyal leads the camel by the nose rope. The camel gets up effortlessly. Snying thar rgyal adjusts the goods on the camel.

Snying thar rgyal

(Holding the nose rope in his left hand and waving at Rang grol with his right hand)

I'm leaving. Goodbye.

Rang grol

Okay, okay.

UNLOADING

EXT. APPROXIMATELY ONE HUNDRED METERS FROM RANG GROL'S HOUSE, GRASSLAND

Indistinct sounds. A dog barks in the distance.

Snying thar rgyal

(Commanding the camel to sit)

Tshigs, tshigs...tshigs

The camel is reluctant to sit. Snying thar rgyal insists. The camel sits carefully. Not far away, two camels make distinctive sounds while mating. Two horses are grazing nearby. Snying thar rgyal ties the lead rope to the camel's legs as hobbles.

Snying thar rgyal

This is a water bucket. This is also a water bucket for fetching water. It's necessary to fetch water. It's a bit far from the water source.

A dog barks sporadically. A cell phone rings indistinctly. The sitting camel chews its cud.

Snying thar rgyal

(Untying the bags and explaining)

This is a *gtor thug* 'a rope around items on the camel that also stabilizes the *ca sri*'. Without it, the items may fall off. Camels can easily go up and down slopes. Camels have two humps, so there's no need for a *gnyel*[1] and a *gong thag* 'chest strap'. That's an advantage of camels. Unloading is very easy. Just take off everything randomly. A camel rope is usually ten meters long. *E bug* should be tied by *glo bdag*. This is an *e bug,* and these poles are hump supporters. This is a headband. This rope is *glo*. You can remove it by pulling it. The tent is *ca sri*. Everything on the camel's back is a necessity at a campsite.

(Continuing)

These are quilts and mats. Now let's pitch the tent, and then we are settled.

Rang grol laughs and opens the bag. He is ready to pour out the sheep pellets.

[1] Items on horseback and yakback are tied with a rope that goes under the tail.

Snying thar rgyal
(Turns to Rang grol)
We can do that later.

Snying thar rgyal goes to the camel and unties the hobbles improvised from the lead rope.

Snying thar rgyal
(Speaking to the camel, while untying the halter from the camel's head)
Benevolent camel! My benevolent camel!

Rang grol
(Reminding Snying thar rgyal of the traditional speech to show appreciation for animals' help)
Go eat grass and drink fresh water.

Snying thar rgyal
Go eat grass and drink fresh water. Ho! Ho!
(Patting the camel and saying)
Ho! Ho! Cho! Cho! (urging the camel to go faster, graze, and relax)

The camel slowly leaves.

Snying thar rgyal
Let's pitch the tent.

CONCLUSION

In about 2006, Father wanted to buy a Honda motorcycle for 1,500 RMB. To me, the camel that Father sold to a Muslim man was much more precious than the motorcycle. I had ridden it while herding and used it to transport heavy goods from the summer to the winter pasture. For example, in 2002, Father and Mother packed a black yak-hair tent, a triangular tent made from black goat-hair and white canvas, water buckets, two sacks of wheat flour, one sack of highland barley, and other necessities on camelback. I had also ridden the camel to see, at that time in my limited travels, "distant" places.

Once, when I napped while herding sheep, I woke up to find the flock of sheep had vanished. Immediately, I untied the camel's hobbles and ordered the camel to sit while I mounted it and then commanded it to stand. I stood on the camel's back between the humps, holding the lead rope, and pulled. The camel obeyed and stood. While the camel raised me high in the air, I was able to see the missing sheep grazing on Uncle Rta kho's pasture.

In 2009, we had loaned our five camels to a paternal relative, Rta b+he. Later we sold the five camels to a Chinese man who lived near Ri bo nyi zla 'Sun-Moon Mountain'. He said that he could sell camel hair and make more money from travelers who wanted to have photographs sitting on a camel. We sold them to this man because we didn't like the idea of the camels being slaughtered.

Uncle Rang grol said, after the filming:

I'm the only person who still keeps a few camels in this community. The future is difficult to predict. I have a car, a tractor, and two motorcycles. I may sell these camels sooner or later. My mother lives in the city. When my father was here, he cared for the camels. He knew everything about camels. It is now my

responsibility to care for the camels. I have convenient transportation, so I don't know how to utilize the camels. During the winter, my family members take turns driving the camels to the water source twice a week and then back to the fenced pasture. We don't need to pay much attention to them. In summer, we move to our summer pasture near Mtsho sngon po. Nobody has time then to tend the camels. We often leave the camels in the care of a neighbor, hoping to find a buyer who can pay what they are worth, but I haven't found such a buyer.

I suggested that camels might be useful in tourism if he took them to Mtsho sngon po and charged tourists to sit on them for photographs. A second suggestion was to lease the camels to a tent hotel or local business people, who would use them to earn money from tourists. I didn't recommend selling his camels because I feel that something rarely seen is somehow a treasure.

In April 2020, I was writing this conclusion and wanted twelve photographs to illustrate how a camel embodied the twelve zodiac animals. I phoned Uncle Rang grol, who informed me he had sold the camels for 7,000 RMB each to a Muslim man. When I asked why, he explained, "It is burdensome to care for camels, and they have no value in our daily life."

APPENDIX ONE: *THE'U RANG* by Pad ma thub brtan

Various *the'u rang* include *gnam the'u* 'sky *the'u rang*'; *bar the'u*, 'medium *the'u rang*', *bar the'u* 'not too big, small, tall, nor short *the'u rang*'; *sa the'u* 'earth *the'u rang*', and so on. Locals often refer to unfamiliar deities as *the'u rang*; however, this is incorrect. Some say *the'u rang* are *chos skyong* 'dharma protectors', but I think *the'u rang* are *gor bdag* 'wealth-acquiring hungry ghosts'. I will now give an example of one-legged *the'u rang*.

Once, a well-known monk greatly respected his *sngas mgo bla ma* 'pillow *bla ma*'.[1] After the monk foresaw his imminent death, he sent an oral message to his *bla ma*, asking him to return to the monastery.

The *bla ma* was giving teachings in a rural village and wanted to return quickly. Meanwhile, when the monk shared his hope of seeing his pillow *bla ma* before his death, a fellow monk said caustically, "You are nothing to the *bla ma*. He doesn't care much about you. You should commit suicide for having such strong hope and for urging the *bla ma* to return. If you can't wait for him, you will die miserably."

The monk thought further explanations were useless and controlled his anger. He was attempting profound religious achievement to show his steadfast dedication to his pillow *bla ma*. Still, now it seemed meaningless to continue diligently learning the doctrines, so he forcefully threw his stool on the ground and stopped practicing the *bla ma*'s teaching. His hatred toward his pillow *bla ma* was intense.

The *bla ma* couldn't return immediately as his disciple wished. The renowned disciple died. On the same day of the monk's death, the monk's beloved donkey died suddenly. After witnessing the renowned monk's and his donkey's deaths, the other monk noticed something was wrong and went outside the monastery to look for the *bla ma*. Fortunately, the *bla ma* bumped into the monk just as he reached the monastery.

"Why are you in such a hurry?" asked the *bla ma*.

"The renowned monk is deceased," answered the monk.

"Well, now there is serious trouble," replied the *bla ma*.

[1] Klu thar rgyal et al. (2020:93) suggests a pillow *bla ma* helps guide the deceased's soul to the next life. Pad ma thub brtan told me that a pillow *bla ma* should be compassionate, righteous, and important to one person or to a specific person's family. At the death of a devotee's death, the pillow *bla ma* sits by the corpse to pray and guide the deceased's soul after death. An exceptional pillow *bla ma* can help the deceased's soul easily reincarnate as a human. There is a common saying: *Sngas mgo bla ma hra dgo, nangs ja'i gtul ma che dgo* 'A person's pillow *bla ma* should be spectacular, morning *rtsam pa* should be big'.

When the *bla ma* entered the renowned monk's residence, he saw the deceased monk with wide-open eyes and an elongated tongue.

The *bla ma* went out and yelled three times. During the final shout, the deceased monk looked back at the pillow *bla ma* from among clouds in the sky while moving into the *the'u rang* realm. The *bla ma* realized it was too late. The deceased monk had become a ghost.

Afterward, when butter lamps were lit in the monasteries, disastrous fires followed. Whenever a person had good intentions, they soon turned into bad intentions. These evil occurrences were related to the deceased monk's malicious wish that he had made at his death - that it was meaningless to follow the doctrines. Even one evil desire in a renowned practitioner's life can trigger dire consequences in living beings. The deceased monk's soul was stuck in Bar do 'an intermediate state between death and reincarnation'. The monk's ghost manifestation maliciously used burning butter lamps to burn monasteries and turn good deeds into bad.

Construction began on a new temple at the monastery where the deceased monk had died. The monastery's disciplinary instructor told a carpenter to cut wood in different shapes. A short time later, the instructor returned and ordered the wood cut in other shapes. This happened so often that the temple couldn't be completed due to the instructor's conflicting orders.

The carpenter eventually realized the instructor who returned and gave conflicting instructions must be an evil ghost in disguise. Otherwise, according to the first instructor's instruction, the temple would have been completed.

One day, after the first instructor's departure, the second instructor came. This time, when the second instructor was about to give contradictory instructions, the carpenter swung his ax and cut off one of the false instructor's legs. Afterward, only the real instructor gave instructions to the carpenter. Without further complications, the carpenter soon finished the temple construction.

When the carpenter reported this account to the *bla ma*, the *bla ma* announced that all the unpleasant incidents had been caused by his disciple who had become a *the'u rang*. The *bla ma* added that the *the'u rang* had now become good and would no longer harm people.

Afterward, those who did not venerate this *the'u rang* used the term *the'u rang rkang gcig* 'one-legged hungry ghost'. Those who did venerate this *the'u rang,* used the term *chos skyong* 'dharma protector'.

APPENDIX TWO: TERMS FOR CAMELS AND CAMEL GEAR

Terms associated with camels follow in this order: Local Tibetan (LT) Wylie, LT script, Literary Tibetan (LIT) Wylie, LIT script, and a description. If LT and LIT are the same, the term is not repeated. Father; Mother; and Mother's uncle, Brug byams, provided the list of local terms. Additionally, we discussed the terms in a WeChat group with my maternal relatives. In the summer of 2018, Brug byams visited my tent, and I recorded his and Mother's conversation about terms and camel-related topics. I also consulted (for Literary Tibetan terms) *Dung dkar tshig mdzod* and the Monlam Dictionary iPhone app.

GENERAL CAMEL TERMS

bsha' rgyu བཤའ་རྒྱུ (LT) ɕɥa rʤə | bsha' gri བཤའ་གྲི (LIT) ɕɥa ʈə | a sharp knife used to castrate camels

ca sri ཅ་སྲི (LT) tɕaʂə | frame

cho'u rig ཆོད་རིག (LT) tɕʰuryɣ | pellets of camel feces

cog rdor ཅོག་རྡོར། (LT) tɛoʁ dor | thor cog ཐོར་ཅོག (LIT) tʰor tɛoʁ | a small amount of hair jutting from the top of a camel's head

e bug ཨེ་སྦུག (LT) ewəx | a blanket placed between the humps

glo thug གློ་ཐུག (LT) alo-tʰəx | glo thag གློ་ཐག (LIT) a̱lo taʁ | a rope tied at the back of the camel after packing to fasten the packed items to prevent them from falling off

glog gdar གློག་གདར། (LT) aloʁ adær | glog dar གློག་དར། (LIT) aloʁ tær | a strip of cloth tied and hung from the head or front leg hair that prevents a camel from becoming dizzy. After a camel is castrated, this strip of cloth may decrease dizziness and pain.

go tho གོ་ཐོ། (LT) |guo-tʰo | chu snod ཆུ་སྣོད། (LIT) tɕʰə rnol | plastic water container

ha mar tho'u le (LT) ཧ་མར་ཐོའུ་ལེ། χaməɾ tʰu le | the middle part of the nose when a camel's nose is pierced

ka ra ཀ་རྭ། kʰa-ra | wood pole inside a tent

khams 'dogs ཁམས་འདོགས། (LT) kʰamdoʁ | Castration by crushing testicles with two wooden poles. The affected area heals in the sun and wind.

lag tshar ལག་ཚར། (LT) laʁ tsʰær | cluster of hair on a camel's front legs that does not grow on a camel's back legs

nog gzhog log ནོག་གཞོག་ལོག་པོག (LT) noʁ ʑoʁloʁ | both camel humps fall in the same direction

nog lang ནོག་ལང། noʁ laŋ | erect camel humps

nog so lo'u ནོག་སོ་ལོའུ། (LT) noʁ sʰo lu | camel humps slumped in different directions

rnga 'dogs རྔ་འདོགས། (LT) arŋa ndoʁ | A type of castration in which a thin rope is tightly tied around the top of the scrotum. Several months later, the scrotum detaches. Sometimes, the castrator cuts the scrotum and removes the testicles.

rnga khu'u རྔ་ཁུའུ། (LT) rŋa-kʰu | rnga khul རྔ་ཁུལ། (LIT) rŋa kʰəl | camel hair

rnga lce རྔ་ལྕེ། (LT) arŋa xtɕe | rnga lci རྔ་ལྕི། (LIT) arŋa xtɕə | liquid camel feces

rtag tshar རྟག་ཚར། (LT) xtəʁ-tser | hair that grows near a camel's ears

rus gur རུས་གུར། (LT) ʐi-kər | ras gur རས་གུར། re kər | white canvas tent

sgye སྒྱེ། (LT) rdʑi | wool bags containing grain and food

sha tho ཤ་ཐོ། (LT) xʰa-tʰo | hump supporter

sna ljibs སྣ་ལྗིབས། (LT) anæ-rdʑəp | sna lcubs སྣ་ལྕུབས། (LIT) rna htɕəv | nose pads

sna stong སྣ་སྟོང་། (LT) anæ-ʂtoŋ | nose fletching

sna thur སྣ་ཐུར། (LT) anæ-tʰər | nose peg

thung ji ཐུང་རྗི། (LT) tʰoŋ-dʑə | camel's chest hair

tshi lkong ཚི་སྐོང་། (LT) tsʰə-ʂkoŋ | a scruff of hair on a camel's head between the ears. A string of this hair may be hung in a tent to repel evil spirits.

MALE CAMELS

a tha ཨ་ཐ། (LT) at^{h}a | castrated camel. Castration time for a four-year-old camel is in the ninth lunisolar month. Elders recommend castrating camels in the coldest month. Locals believe the colder the weather, the better for castration.

a tha dkar ldan ཨ་ཐ་དཀར་ལྡན། (LT) at^{h}a xkær-dən | castrated white-camel

a tha dmar yag ཨ་ཐ་དམར་ཡག (LT) at^{h}a amær-jəʁ | castrated crimson-camel

a tha reg ring ཨ་ཐ་རེག་རིང་། (LT) at^{h}a rəʁ-rəŋ | castrated brown-camel

dkar ldan དཀར་ལྡན། (LT) xkær-dən | white-camel

dmar yag དམར་ཡག (LT) amær-jəʁ | crimson-camel

gcig ga གཅིག་ག (LT) xtsiɣ-ga | five-year-old

nog lang ནོག་ལང་། noʁ laŋ | camel humps stand erect

nog nya ནོག་ཉ། noʁ-ɲa | nog nyal ནོག་ཉལ། noʁ ɲel | has floppy humps

nyis langs ཉིས་ལངས། (LT) ɲi-vlaŋ | three-year-old

pho bzhi ཕོ་བཞི། (LIT) p^{h}o vʑə | castration year, or four-year-old. The age of four is considered the best time for castration.

reg ring རེག་རིང་། (LT) rəʁ-rəŋ | brown-camel

rnga gseb ཌ་གསེབ། (LT) rŋa-ʁsep | uncastrated

rnga rgan ཌ་རྒན། rŋa-rŋen | five-year-old and older

rnga rgye'u ཌ་རྒྱུ། (LT) rŋa-rdʑi | hog bzhi ཧོག་བཞི། (LT) hoʁ-ʑə | pho

rnga rte'u ཌ་རྟེ། (LT) rŋa-rti | rnge'u རྔེ (LIT) rŋi ə | one-year-old

rnga thor ཌ་ཐོར། rŋa-t^{h}or | two-year-old

FEMALE CAMELS

bzhi mo བཞི་མོ། vʑə-mo | four-year-old

dkar ldan ma དཀར་ལྡན་མ། (LT) xkær-dən-ma | white-colored

dmar yag ma དམར་ཡག་མ (LT) amær-jəʁ-ma | crimson-colored

gcig ga གཅིག་ག (LT) xtsiɣ-ga | five-year-old

mo rnga མོ་ཌ། mo-rŋa | female camel

nag lang ma ནག་ལང་མ། (LT) noʁ-laŋ-ma | has erect humps

nag nya ma ནག་ཉ་མ། (LT) noʁ-ɲa-ma | has floppy humps

reg ring ma རེག་རིང་མ། (LT) rəʁ-rəŋ-ma | brown-colored

rnga rgan ma ཌ་རྒན་མ། rŋa-rgen-ma | five-year-old and older

rnga rgyas ma རྔ་རྒྱས་མ། (LT) rŋa-rdzi-ma | three-year-old
rnga rte'u རྔ་རྟེའུ། rŋa-rti | one-year-old calf
rnga thor ma རྔ་ཐོར་མ། rŋa-tʰor-ma | two-year-old

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PHOTOGRAPHS

FIG 6. Rdo rje and I on our way to collect camels from the fenced pasture behind Uncle Rang grol's home (10 February 2017, Skal bzang tshe brtan).

FIG 7. One bull and three female camels headed to Uncle Rang grol's home (10 February 2017, Skal bzang tshe brtan).

FIG 8. Camels near Uncle Rang grol's home (10 February 2017, Skal bzang tshe brtan).

FIG 9. Uncle Rang grol checks to see if the *rnga rgan ma* is pregnant (10 February 2017, Skal bzang tshe brtan).

FIG 10. Father took this photograph of wallpaper in the Changshun Business Hotel's reception room in Tshwa ka during a trip with nine friends to view the salt lake (2 March 2017, Snying thar rgyal). This image depicts Chinggis Khan and his ministers sculpted from salt at Tshwa ka. During Father's visit, they each presented three *gter khug* 'mixture of barley, juniper, and highland barley flour in a small bag' to a local person responsible for throwing the *gter khug* into the lake. They observed the local man go to the middle of the lake and throw the *gter khug* into the salt lake, which is believed to fulfill wishes. Father thought that the *gter khug* were for nagas, so he made gaining-wealth wishes.

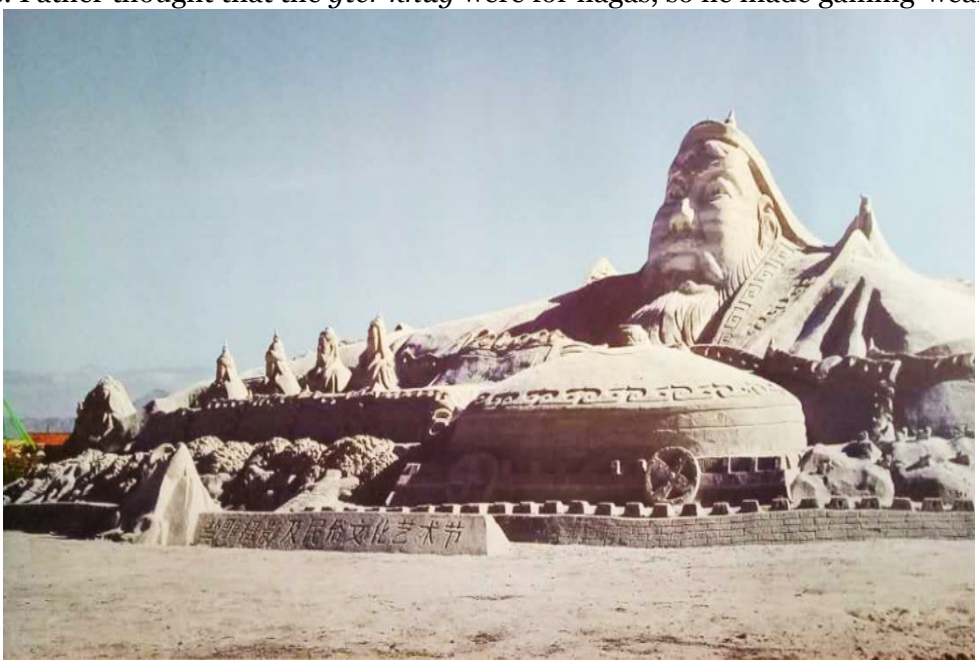

FIG 11. Father and Uncle Rang grol chat about tribal issues, the weather, livestock, preparation for Lo sar 'Tibetan New Year', and WIFI. The device on the table uses a SIM card to receive internet transmissions and share with mobile phones (10 February 2017, Rang grol's adobe house, Skal bzang tshe brtan).

FIG 12. Sunrise. The large tent is for entertaining guests and is also where Father, Mother, Brother, and I sleep. The small tent is for storing various items (18 August 2017, summer pasture, Skal bzang tshe brtan).

FIG 13. An altar and a *dar lcog* 'prayer flag' pole with colorful prayer flags. We have an altar on every pasture where we stay. In March 2020, Father asked a metalsmith in Chab cha to make a portable metal altar, so we would no longer need to build an altar (19 August 2017, summer pasture, Skal bzang tshe brtan).

FIG 14. People enjoy summer in the Mtsho sngon po area, as do livestock. To the left of the resting horse is a horse blanket (19 August 2017, summer pasture, Skal bzang tshe brtan).

FIG 15. A night view of my family's winter house in Ru chen gsum pa (19 December 2015, Ru chen gsum pa, a Korean friend known as Don 'grub).[1]

TIBETAN TERMS

'brug byams འབྲུག་བྱམས།

'jam dbyangs nag po འཇམ་དབྱངས་ནག་པོ།

a b+hu yag ཨ་བྷུ་ཡག

a g.yang la bo, rtswa kha song nga rtswa zo, chu kha song nga chu thungs ཨ་གཡང་ལ་བོ། རྩྭ་ཁ་སོང་ངྷ་རྩྭ་ཟོ། ཆུ་ཁ་སོང་ངྷ་ཆུ་ཐུང་ས།

a mdo ཨ་མདོ།

a myes b+wa yan ཨ་མྱེས་བྷ་ཡན།

a myes brag dkar ཨ་མྱེས་བག་དཀར།

a myes rma chen ཨ་མྱེས་རྨ་ཆེན།

a myes yul lha ཨ་མྱེས་ཡུལ་ལྷ།

a pha ཨ་ཕ།

a rta ཨ་རྟ།

bar do བར་དོ།

bar the'u བར་ཐེའུ།

bkra shis rtags brgyad བཀྲ་ཤིས་རྟགས་བརྒྱད།

bla ma བླ་མ།

blo bzang 'phrin las བློ་བཟང་འཕྲིན་ལས།

[1] See Skal bzang tshe brtan (2017:375-379) for seven additional photos illustrating local camels and camel gear (https://bit.ly/2LuL64U, accessed 21 August 2019).

blon po gser chen བློན་པོ་གསེར་ཆེན།

brag dkar བྲག་དཀར།

bye thang gi gru gzings བྱེ་ཐང་གི་གྲུ་གཟིངས།

cang shes ཅང་ཤེས།

chab cha ཆབ་ཆ།

chos skyong ཆོས་སྐྱོང་།

chu ring ཆུ་རིང་།

dar lcog དར་ལྕོག

dbang kho དབང་ཁོ།

dbus gtsang དབུས་གཙང་།

don 'grub དོན་འགྲུབ།

dug tsher དུག་ཚེར།

dung dkar tshig mdzod དུང་དཀར་ཚིག་མཛོད།

dung dkar tshig mdzod chen mo དུང་དཀར་ཚིག་མཛོད་ཆེན་མོ།

glo གློ།

glo bdag གློ་བདག

gnam skyong gong ma rgyal mo གནམ་སྐྱོང་གོང་མ་རྒྱལ་མོ།

gnam the'u གནམ་ཐེའུ།

gnyel གཉེལ།

gong thag གོང་ཐག

gor bdag གོར་བདག

gsang sgrog གསང་སྒྲོག

gser chen གསེར་ཆེན།

gter khug གཏེར་ཁུག

gtor thug གཏོར་ཐུག

ho ཧོ།

khams ཁམས།

khri ka ཁྲི་ཀ།

kho tse ཁོ་ཙེ།

klu thar rgyal ཀླུ་ཐར་རྒྱལ།

kun 'grub tshe ring ཀུན་འགྲུབ་ཚེ་རིང་།

kun dga' ཀུན་དགའ།

kun dga' mtsho mo ཀུན་དགའ་མཚོ་མོ།

lha sa ལྷ་ས།

lo sar ལོ་སར།

mgo sdom མགོ་སྡོམ།

mi rigs tshong ra མི་རིགས་ཚོང་ར།

mtsho lho མཚོ་ལྷོ།

mtsho nub མཚོ་ནུབ།

mtsho sngon མཚོ་སྔོན།

mtsho sngon khri shor rgyal mo མཚོ་སྔོན་ཁྲི་ཤོར་རྒྱལ་མོ།

mtsho sngon po མཚོ་སྔོན་པོ།

mtsho snying ma hwa de wa མཚོ་སྙིང་མ་ཧྭ་དེ་ཝ།

pad ma thub brtan པད་མ་ཐུབ་བརྟན།

phag mo sgrol ma ཕག་མོ་སྒྲོལ་མ།

rang grol རང་གྲོལ།

rdo rje རྡོ་རྗེ།

rdza rgan རྫ་རྒན།

reb gong རེབ་གོང་།

ri b+ho རི་སྦྷོ།

ri bo nyi zla རི་བོ་ཉི་ཟླ།

rma chu རྨ་ཆུ།

rma chu'i phar kha'i mi རྨ་ཆུའི་ཕར་ཁའི་མི།

rin chen rdo rje རིན་ཆེན་རྡོ་རྗེ།

rnga gseb ཌ་གསེབ།

rnga rgan ma ཌ་རྒན་མ།

rnga thor ma ཌ་ཐོར་མ།

rta b+he རྟ་བྷེ།

rta kho རྟ་ཁོ།

rta nag ma རྟ་ནག་མ།

rtsam pa རྩམ་པ།

ru chen gsum pa རུ་ཆེན་གསུམ་པ།

sa the'u ས་ཐེའུ།

sgyes སྒྱེས།

skal bzang dar rgyas སྐལ་བཟང་དར་རྒྱས།

skal bzang tshe brtan སྐལ་བཟང་ཚེ་བརྟན།

skar ma 'tsho སྐར་མ་འཚོ།

sngas mgo bla ma སྔགས་མགོ་བླ་མ།

sngas mgo bla ma hra dgo, nangs ja'i gtul ma che dgo སྔགས་མགོ་བླ་མ་ཁ་དགོ། ནངས་རྫི་གཏུལ་མ་ཆེ་དགོ།

snying lcags rgyal སྙིང་ལྕགས་རྒྱལ།

snying thar rgyal སྙིང་ཐར་རྒྱལ།

sog 'gel སོག་འགེལ།

srid pa rgan po སྲིད་པ་རྒན་པོ།

srung ma dpal ldan lha mo སྲུང་མ་དཔལ་ལྡན་ལྷ་མོ།

stong skor སྟོང་སྐོར།

tha re ཐ་རེ།

thang dkar ma ཐང་དཀར་མ།

thang dkar ma bca' sdod slob chung ཐང་དཀར་མ་བཅའ་སྡོད་སློབ་ཆུང་།

thang ka ཐང་ཀ།

the'u rang ཐེའུ་རང་།

the'u rang rkang gcig ཐེའུ་རང་རྐང་གཅིག

thur 'gel ཐུར་འགེལ།

tshangs dbyangs rgya mtsho ཚངས་དབྱངས་རྒྱ་མཚོ།

tshigs ཚིགས།

tshu dbang pa thur ཚུ་དབང་པ་ཐུར།

tshul khrims ཚུལ་ཁྲིམས།

tshwa kha ཚྭ་ཁ།

wo dbye gzhung ཝོ་དབྱེ་གཞུང་།

wo dbye tshwa mtsho dkar mo ཝོ་དབྱེ་ཚྭ་མཚོ་དཀར་མོ།

zi ling ཟི་ལིང་།

CHINESE TERMS

Anduo 安多
Chaka 茶卡
Changshun 昌顺
Gazangcaidan 尕藏才旦
Gonghe 共和
Guide 贵德
Hainan 海南
Haixi 海西
Huangyuan 湟源
jiashi 驾驶
Kangba 康巴
Qiabuqia 恰卜恰
Qinghai 青海
Qurang 曲让
Sandadui 三大队
Tanggemu 塘格木
Wulan 乌兰
Weizang 卫藏
Wenchangjia 文昌加
Xining 西宁